Five Things an Educator Should Know About Copyright Laws

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As an educator, we have many resources at our disposal. We often collaborate and share resources. When it comes to sharing resources and copying materials, many educators are not familiar with the many facets of Copyright Laws. This report will outline five things all educators should know about Copyright Laws. The outline format is in a Q & A style.

Q: When does a Copyright expire?

A: According to the U.S. Circular 92:

1. In General
2. Copyright in a work created on or after January 1, 1978 that endures for a term consisting of the life of the author and 70 years after the author's death
3. Anonymous Works, Pseudonymous Works, and Works Made for Hire
4. 95 years from the year of its first publication, or a term of 120 years from the year of its creation

Q: Can I share this audio/video file with my colleagues and download it for students to use at home?

A: When it comes to downloading or sharing video/audio files, educators must read all the copyright/user agreements. Each audio/video file has specific copyright/license agreements. Until proper royalties are paid, “no person shall import into and distribute, or manufacture and distribute, any digital media” that violates the media’s copyright/license agreements (Circular 92, 2007). A copy of your license agreements should always be readily accessible.

Q: What videos can be shown in the classrooms or on campuses?

A: “Classroom videos are almost entirely okay as long as they are instructionally based. It can be a Disney movie, a television broadcast, or a DVD as long as it bears on the lesson at hand. Entertainment (or reward) requires a license (Davidson, 2007).” A great resource for Educational Copyright information is <http://www.movlic.com/k12/copyright.html>.

Q: Can I make a class set of this on the copier?

A: “Although the copy machine can be used to make copies for classroom use, (see the Fair Use Guidelines), it may not be used in lieu of purchase and not for consumables” (Davidson, 2007). Fair Use Resource: <http://www.copyright.gov/fls/fl102.html>

Q: Can we install this software on every computer or share an online username/password?

A: License terms determine how many copies can be made and on what type of machines, the software can be installed on. Many licenses allow for multiple users, but sharing passwords beyond the license would be a violation. All campuses should have a system in place for tracking license agreements. Each campus should have a person designated to maintain and uphold license agreements. (Circular 92, 2007; Davidson, 2007)

Copyright Laws can be confusing and easily violated. It is our goal to keep all District employees educated on Copyright Laws and Fair Use Policies. There are many resources available to District employees that will assist them with Copyright Laws.

References

Copyright Law of the United States and Related Laws Contained in Title 17 of the United States Code, Circular 92, 2007.

<http://www.copyright.gov/fls/fl102.html>

Davidson, Hall. *Technology & Learning:* June 2005: 25. 11: Research Library pg. S2.

<http://www.movlic.com/k12/copyright.html>